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ABSTRACT

To help teachers assess students' affective responses to teaching films, a scale as established and displayed graphically under which reactions may be rated as positive/active, positive/passive, negative/active, and negative/passive. Procedure in using the scale is explained and a "film reaction sheet" provided. Suggested ways of utilizing the scale to select films which will best engender the desired responses are given. (SK)

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CLASSIFICATION OF STUDENT AFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO TEACHING FILMS

by

Charles R. Haller
Assistant Director
Capitol Region Education Council

Director, METRO media evaluation center

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443 Windsor Avenue
Windsor, Connecticut 06095

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PREMISES:

Some films set out to teach something (in a cognitive sense) directly. Such cognates are usually set forth in some sort of objective statement. Other films set out to engender a feeling, or affective response. Still others are "slices of life" or "events", and make no further claim for themselves.

Yet, it seems reasonable to assume that any film produces some sort of affective response or reaction. It would be impossible to cite "no reaction" unless one had slept through the entire showing. If an instructor is adequately to plan programs of instruction around educational films, he must have a good indication as to the probable affective responses of the viewing audience, as well as the cognitive learnings which will follow. The aim of this discussion then, is to assign some sort of value to the various types of affective responses which may be gathered from typical audiences, and to present them in such a way that the film selector will have better selection criteria with which to work.

GATHERING DATA:

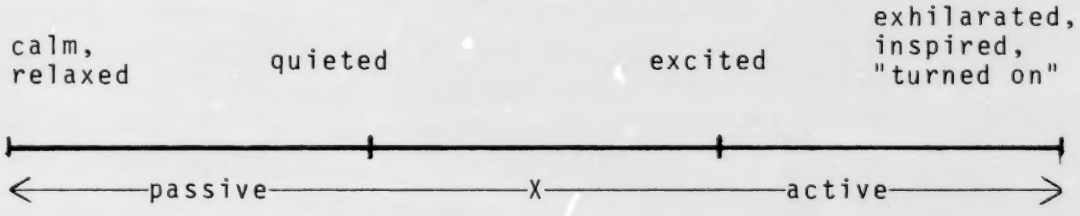
In providing evaluative information to prospective film users, the METRO project of the Capitol Region Education Council has found that two types of data must be gathered.

The first of these is a simple, one-sentence recapitulation of the "message" of the film. The quality and clarity

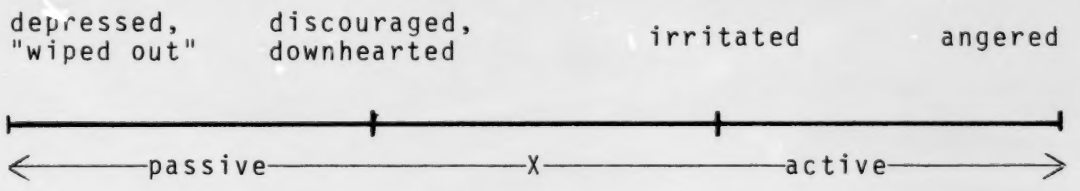
of such a statement tends to vary with the age and writing skill of the viewer, but a response of this type usually tells whether or not a film is getting its point across (or some point across).

Affective responses, however, are categorized on one of two scales, which, for ease of handling, are laid out on a continuum from passive to active, as follows:

POSITIVE RESPONSES



NEGATIVE RESPONSES



In post-film reaction sheets, the appropriate words are simply listed in random order. (Earlier attempts at displaying responses on the two scales produced a marked tendency for viewers to react on both scales, which necessitated large

amounts of trashed data). The viewer is asked, immediately after viewing the film, to check the one word which comes closest to his feeling at that time.

The resulting form of the reaction sheet in use at the time of this writing is:

METRO Film Reaction Sheet

Film Title_____Your Age_____

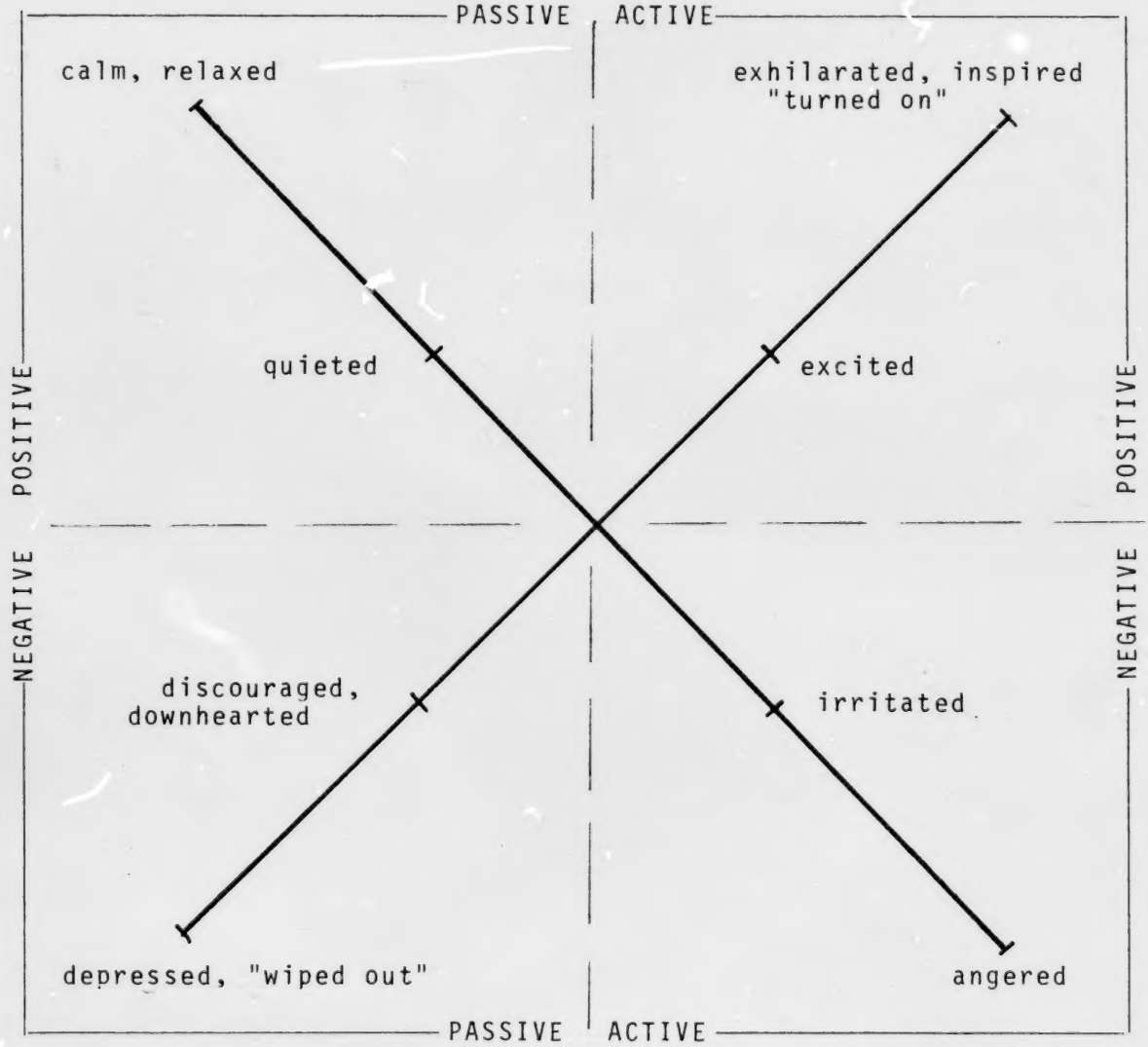
1. Most films make a statement of some sort to the viewer. Please state (in one sentence) the message which this film gave to you.

2. Films also leave you with a feeling. Please check the one response which comes closest to describing your feeling.

_____calm	_____angered
_____irritated	_____quieted
_____"turned on"	_____discouraged
_____depressed	_____exhilarated
_____relaxed	_____"wiped out"
_____downhearted	_____inspired
_____excited	

INTERPRETATION OF DATA:

Data so gathered are displayed on a graph which is actually far simpler than first glance would indicate. Essentially, responses are seen to fall into one of four quadrants in the following display:



In actuality, the graphic format for tabulating data is a much simplified matrix, with most of the extranea left out. The tabulation method is simply to "x" in the individual responses from the test group on the simplified grid, as follows:

Thus, we see from the sample graph of this hypothetical film that the majority of the responses have fallen into the "positive / active" range, which essentially indicates that the majority of this audience is probably going to want to do more of whatever it was the film was about. (The one "x" in dead center indicates that someone did sleep through the film.)

This display mode is a simple modification of a device used by meteorologists to plot "wind roses" on a compass rose, thus indicating the nature of the prevailing winds in any given area. The METRO project has found that instructors have a need to know "which way the wind is likely to blow" as a result of showing a film.

SOME RESULTS AND SOME SPECULATION:

As a result of test utilization of this method of categorizing affective responses, the following statements give every indication of being true:

1. Films with the combination of clear message and positive / active responses make the best teaching films.

2. Films with diverse and strongly polarized responses create excellent discussion potential.

3. Responses may change enormously from the pre- to post-discussion data.

4. Reactions to a film are never to the film alone, but to the film plus all other related (and some non-related) experiences.

5. As a result of #4, adults often have responses which are entirely different from students.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:

A method is offered for categorizing and easily graphing affective responses to films. The resultant display gives teachers a method of selecting films for which field-test results give strong indications of possible utilization.